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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF, DRL, PRM, G/TIP

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CHAD: CHARGE PRESSES MINISTER ON RECRUITMENT/CHILD  
SOLDIER ISSUES

1. (SBU) Summary: Charge met September 24 with newly appointed Chadian Minister of Human Rights H.E. Abderaman Djasnabaille to press the Minister on human rights problems, specifically on child recruitment. Djasnabaille welcomed continued dialogue with the U.S. and the international community on areas of mutual concern, including human rights. Djasnabaille acknowledged that trafficking and recruitment of children are serious concerns. He told Charge that the GOC is seeking human rights progress, including through a GOC-sponsored conference on human rights in Chad scheduled for later this year. End Summary

2. (SBU) Djasnabaille told Charge that the GOC works closely with NGOs and international organizations (specifically UNICEF) to reintegrate children associated with armed forces and to address trafficking in persons. While unable to quantify the problem, Djasnabaille noted that he has heard that Chadian and Darfurian rebel groups actively recruit child soldiers. He complained that people in Chad "don't always have a birth certificate (to prove their age) and they want to have a job" so monitoring recruitment is a challenge. Despite this, he said that the GOC has worked since the beginning of the Darfur crisis to "protect the refugees which include children" from cross border infiltration. He reiterated that problems of child soldiering and trafficking in persons "preoccupy the government" and that he, Defense Minister Kamoungue and provincial governors have worked together to halt the abuses.

3. (SBU) Djasnabaille gave Charge a copy of a proposal for a GOC-sponsored conference on human rights in December 2008. The conference aims to: bring together the principle actors (government officials, NGOs, and international organizations) to discuss and raise awareness of human rights issues in Chad and to discuss moving forward on regional coordination with neighboring countries to combat trafficking. Charge thanked Djasnabaille for his efforts on child soldiers and encouraged him to push for total extraction of children from armed groups.

4. (SBU) Comment: Djasnabaille has moved through many cabinet portfolios over the past few years, including previously serving as Minister of Human Rights in 2005 so it is not surprising that he would be knowledgeable on Chadian human rights issues. The initiative for a GOC-sponsored conference on human rights and the close cooperation with the Ministry of Defense echoes the Minister's message that the government is taking human rights seriously. In his initial meeting with the Charge, the Minister said all the right things about wanting to work with the international community on child soldiers; however, it remains to be seen if the GOC is willing to put its money where its mouth is and adequately allocate resources towards combating illegal recruitment and addressing trafficking in persons. End Comment.  
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